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RUEHLM/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO PRIORITY 6989
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 2297
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 5035
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6222
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 2693
RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA PRIORITY 4350
RUEHMT/AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY 0004
RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY

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TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PREL](#) [KPAO](#) [PHUM](#) [NP](#)

SUBJECT: NEPAL: NOMINATION FOR SECRETARY'S AWARD FOR
INTERNATIONAL WOMEN OF COURAGE

REF: SECSTATE 99729

¶1. Post is pleased to nominate Ramila Acharya for the
Secretary's Award for International Women of Courage.

Full Name: Ramila Acharya
Job Title/Association: Clinic Assistant/Maiti Nepal
Date of Birth: July 4, 1989
Country of Birth: Nepal
Citizenship: Nepali
Address: c/o Maiti Nepal, Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone Number: 977 1 449 4816
E-mail: info@maitinepal.org

Ramila's Story

¶2. Ramila grew up in a poor family in rural, mid-western
Nepal. Her family did not have the means to send her or her
older sister, Kalpana, to school past grade five. Ramila's
parents were persuaded to send Kalpana to India with a woman
named Khirmi Praiyar. Khirmi promised the family Kalpana
would have a lucrative job in India that would allow her to
send money home and return better off in a few years. When
Ramila was sixteen, Khirmi returned for her. Khirmi smuggled
Ramila out of Nepal using false documents and took her to the
brothel in New Delhi where her sister had been put to work
and kept a virtual prisoner. Ramila spent 10 nights in the
brothel. On the 11th day she risked her life to escape, and
most remarkably made her way back into Nepal. Upon her
return, Ramila found shelter, counseling and support at Maiti
Nepal, a non-government organization working to combat
trafficking in Nepal. With their support and encouragement
Ramila made the brave decision to file charges against her
trafficker and risked her life a second time, returning to
New Delhi to rescue her sister and her sister's two
daughters. In August of 2008, after a protracted legal
battle, Ramila and Kalpana's trafficker, Khirmi Praiyar, was
sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Background

¶3. Thousands of Nepali girls are trafficked into Indian brothels each year. The trade is fueled by ignorance and illiteracy and driven by poverty, gender discrimination and greed. Most of the time, the girls don't know how to escape. Most are uneducated, poor and too ashamed to tell their families what they are doing. In the brothels girls averaging 16 years old, but some as young as 7, are forced to serve between five and twenty-five clients per day. Unwilling girls are beaten, burned with cigarettes, shocked with electric cords, and even burned with acid. Many have multiple unwanted pregnancies, followed by multiple backroom abortions. HIV AIDS is an enormous problem.

Justification

¶4. While there are a number of organizations working to stop human trafficking, Ramila's contribution to the battle is as profound as it is personal. Ramila was only 16 when she was trafficked into the Indian brothel. While most in her position are simply paralyzed by despair, Ramila somehow found the courage to escape and the means to return to Nepal. Despite the trauma and stigma associated with trafficking cases - Ramila choose to confront her trafficker and tell her story. She sought justice for herself, her sister and countless other girls who share her story. Ramila literally put her life on the line in an effort to win freedom and dignity for her sister and other victims of trafficking. Today Ramila continues the fight. With support from Maiti Nepal, Ramila is now a board member of an organization called

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"Utsha" ("enthusiasm") dedicated to encouraging victims to testify against their traffickers. Ramila also continues to bravely tell her own story and in 2008 was featured in the compelling MTV documentary, "Sold," addressing human trafficking in South Asia. Human trafficking is truly one of the great tragedies of our time. Ramila's story demonstrates outstanding courage and leadership in promoting human rights, freedom and dignity for all trafficking victims - and for this she should be applauded.

¶5. Maiti Nepal and Ramila Acharya have been notified of her nomination for this award. Ramila's nomination reinforces U.S. support for the rule of law and human rights - central aspects of both the President's Freedom Agenda and the embassy's Mission Strategic Plan.
POWELL